
From: Hall, Lynda
To: Flahive, Katie; Larsen, Erika; Lehman, Stuart; Waye, Don; Solloway, Chris
Sent: 3/26/2014 11:39:00 AM
Subject: FW: please send talking points for OW staff meeting by 2pm tomorrow - thx. EOM.

FYI

From: Hall, Lynda
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:38 AM
To: Nandi, Romell
Cc: Tom Wall; Gale (bonanno.gale@epa.gov)
Subject: RE: please send talking points for OW staff meeting by 2pm tomorrow - thx. EOM.

ACWA Workgroup Survey on NWQI

- In January the ACWA NPS/319 workgroup conducted an informal survey of WG members on their experiences in NWQI. The purpose of the questionnaire was to strengthen NWQI by soliciting a range of state experiences and input on how to best move forward with the initiative, building on both the opportunities and the challenges.
- While EPA did not initiate or control this effort, ACWA provided us an opportunity to review the draft survey questions and we suggested ways to strengthen them. We also participated on a workgroup call where ACWA discussed the preliminary results of the survey: 19 states responded and communicated that overall NWQI is helping to improve water quality efforts and increase collaboration between states and NRCS. The primary area for improvement identified was to allow for longer sign-up times so there is more time for outreach and landowner recruitment in watersheds.
- ACWA may have reached out again to states to get more responses – we have not been involved in that effort.
- As a result of this survey and discussion, our understanding is that EPA and USDA will receive a letter from ACWA sharing the findings including recommendations on how NWQI can be strengthened.
- Last week we had an NWQI coordination meeting with NRCS that included three of the Regional Conservationists (RCs) and Martin Lowenfish, national initiatives coordinator. We informed NRCS about the ACWA survey and that a letter may be forthcoming within the next month or two. We discussed the desire for a longer sign-up period; the good news is that the RC's indicated that under the new Farm Bill they anticipate somewhat greater flexibility in the length of time during which contracts can be solicited and let (there will be some "no year" money under EQIP).

Other NWQI News – Monitoring and Data Sharing Agreements

-Also in last week's meeting with NRCS we discussed the status of state/NRCS monitoring partnerships and whether data sharing agreements (DSA) are being put in place to support state monitoring efforts. After conducting a quick check-in with the regions that represented ~ 30 states, we reported to NRCS that roughly 1/3 had data agreements in place, 1/3 hadn't yet entered into DSA discussions, and about 1/3 were encountering some difficulties in getting DSA underway. We asked NRCS to clearly communicate to state cons that they are encouraged to set up DSA with WQ agency counterparts. NRCS readily agreed to do so and will use face-to-face meetings with all state cons in early April to do so. We will work with NRCS staff on the info/talking points that will be shared.

Oregon CZARA Program

On March 21st the public comment period closed on the proposed decision to find that OR has not submitted an approvable Coastal NPS program. 75 sets of comments were submitted, pro and con, some of them quite substantial. March 21st was also the deadline for OR to make a final submittal to EPA and NOAA on the remaining management measures (OSDS, new development, Forestry) for consideration in the agencies' final decision. According to the terms of the settlement agreement this decision is to be made by May 15th – an extension of that deadline will need to be negotiated.

From: Nandi, Romell

Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:17 AM

To: OWOW Managers Group; Brown, Sineta

Subject: please send talking points for OW staff meeting by 2pm tomorrow - thx. EOM.